

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 IO-10 SAM-01 OMB-01 SY-05 SCS-03

SCA-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /079 W

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R 100730Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2434

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ARREST SITUATION

REF: LISBON 1675

SUMMARY: IT IS BECOMING PROGRESSIVELY MORE DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE OUT THOSE PERSONS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH MARCH 11 COUP ATTEMPT FROM THOSE DETAINED FOR LINKS TO "PORTUGUESE LIBERATION ARMY" (ELP), MRPP OR OLD REGIME'S SECRET POLICE (PIDE/DGS). RELEASES APPEAR TO OUTNUMBER NEW ARRESTS, BUT NEWS ACCOUNTS OF SOME RELEASES HAVE BEEN DENIED. END SUMMARY.

1. "ARRESTS" NEWS STORIES CURRENTLY APPEARING IN PRESS FOCUS MORE ON THE ELP THAN ON MARCH 11 COUP. ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO, APPOINTED HEAD OF COMMISSION INVESTIGATING COUP ATTEMPT, ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 4 THAT SEVERAL OF THOSE PREVIOUSLY ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH COUP WERE ALSO PARTICIPANTS IN ELP CONSPIRACY.

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2. MOST SIGNIFICANT ELP-CONNECTED ARRESTS OCCURRED NIGHT OF

APRIL 2-3 IN OPORTO. 21 YOUNG MEMBERS OF CENTRIST YOUTH (JC, YOUTH WING OF MODERATE RIGHT CDS), INCLUDING ONE AGE 16, WERE PICKED UP AND CHARGED WITH HAVING CONNECTIONS WITH "EXTREME RIGHTIST REVOLUTIONARY GROUP." GROUP HAS BEEN HELD INCOMMUNICADO, PROTESTS FROM CDS LEADERS NOTWITHSTANDING. ARRESTS WERE ORDERED BY OPORTO REGIONAL MILITARY COMMAND.

3. SEVERAL GROUPS OF PERSONS PREVIOUSLY DETAINED HAVE BEEN RELEASED IN LAST SEVERAL DAYS, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT SOME CONFUSION. FORMER PRESIDENT SPINOLA'S BROTHER FRANCISCO WAS RELEASED, THEN REARRESTED; A NEPHEW, FERNANDO, WAS ALSO RELEASED. SOME OF MILITARY ARRESTEES RELEASED FROM PRISON HAVE BEEN KEPT UNDER HOUSE ARREST; IN SOME OF THESE CASES THE STATUS OF HOUSE ARREST WAS SUBSEQUENTLY LIFTED. ALTHOUGH ADDITIONAL ARREST ANNOUNCEMENTS STILL APPEAR IN CONNECTION WITH MARCH 11 COUP AND ELP INVESTIGATIONS, IT APPEARS THAT OVERALL MORE PERSONS ARE GETTING OUT OF PRISON THAN ARE BEING PUT IN.

4. ARRESTS OF MRPP MILITANTS HAVE ALSO OCCURRED. MRPP OFFICIALS CHARGED ON APRIL 7 THAT "MORE THAN 100" OF THEIR MEMBERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. ON APRIL 8 MRPP-DOMINATED LISBON LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION PROTESTED ARRESTS OF SOME "FOUR DOZEN" MRPP SYMPATHIZERS OVER APRIL 5-6 WEEKEND. IN SEPARATE CASE APRIL 8 FIVE OTHER MRPP MEMBERS WERE ARRESTED IN BARREIRO. REASONS FOR ARRESTS HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR, BUT SLOGANEERING (AND PASTING OF POSTERS ON WALLS) HAS BEEN ONE RECURRING ELEMENT. (SUCH ACTIVITY IS BANNED, CONSIDERING THAT COUNCIL OF THE REVOLUTION HAS REVOKED MRPP'S "LEGALIZATION.") ANOTHER RECURRING FEATURE HAS BEEN YOUTHFULNESS OF ARRESTEES. REPORTS AGREE THAT SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED ARE IN MID AND EARLY TEENS. MANY, IF NOT MOST, OF THOSE ARRESTED HAVE BEEN HELD ONLY BRIEFLY, SUBSEQUENTLY BEING RELEASED OR RELEASED ON SUSPENDED SENTENCES.

5. SEPARATE FROM ABOVE ARE CASES INVOLVING PERSONS CHARGED WITH HAVING BEEN INFORMERS FOR OLD REGIME'S SECRET POLICE. LONG LISTS HAVE APPEARED IN PRINT IN RECENT DAYS GIVING NAMES OF INFORMERS AND AMOUNTS THEY WERE ALLEGEDLY PAID. IN A FEW OF THESE CASES THE PERSONS NAMED WERE ALSO ARRESTED.

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6. ONE MORE, SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT "POLITICAL" ARREST CASE INVOLVES THE ELEVEN OFFICIALS OF THE CHEMICAL WORKERS UNION PICKED UP ON MARCH 9. ALL WERE FREED ON MARCH 21.

7. COMMENT: GOP APPEARS TO HAVE ADOPTED A RELATIVELY TOUGH LINE TOWARD MRPP. HOWEVER, "RELATIVELY" REFERS TO GOP'S PREVIOUS POLICY OF TURNING OTHER CHEEK TO VIRTUALLY ANY PROVOCATION. FOR MOMENT AT LEAST, ALTHOUGH BANNED AND INCRESINGLY HARASSED, MRPP

STANDS IN NO DANGER OF OUTRIGHT REPRESSION FROM A GOVERNMENT
CONCERNED WITH AVOIDING CONFRONTATIONS. AS FOR PIDE/DGS INFORMERS,
CLOCK MAY BE RUNNING OUT FOR MANY WHO, UNTIL NOW, HAVE MANAGED
TO AVOID SPOTLIGHT OF PUBLICITY. GOP MAY BECOME MORE STERN IN
FUTURE, BUT FOR MOMENT IT APPEARS CONTENT WITH A POLICY OF
PUNISHING BY PUBLICATION, NOT BY SENTENCE. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO
COUP/ELP PLOTTERS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. GOP HAS ANNOUNCED THAT A
REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY TRIBUNAL WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO DEAL WITH
THESE CASES BUT HAS GIVEN NO TIME FRAME FOR ITS ESTABLISHMENT.
MOST OMINOUS ELEMENT IN ENTIRE SITUATION IS MOTIVATION LYING
BEHIND MILITARY'S OPORTO CENTRIST YOUTH ARRESTS. AUTHORITIES
MAY BE INVOLVED IN NOTHING MORE SERIOUS THAN A FISHING EXPEDITION.
ON OTHER HAND, THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME LAST MINUTE ANTI-CDS
ELECTORAL RUSE IS INTENDED CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.
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